

Carol service talk

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Preacher: Benji Cook

[0 : 0 0] the fourth reading will be from john chapter 3 verse 16 to 21 and on page 8 in this booklet for god so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life for god did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him whoever believes in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of god and this is the judgment the light has come into the world and the people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil for everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come into the light lest its deeds should be exposed but whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in god good morning it is wonderful to be with you my name is benji i'm the assistant minister here at grace church and if you are wondering why a sixth former has wandered into the wrong building don't worry i have graduated now we as brits we don't like pointless things we hate pointless things i once had a data entry job for a bank that was checking the invoice numbers next to the invoice on my desk 11 hours a day and i thought the university education was worth it folks it was worth it we hate pointless things but we in particular brits we really know pointless things and if you've ever bumped into a brits they turn around to you and they say sorry we say sorry so much that the word has lost all meaning all meaning whatsoever um i basically say in every single sentence it's become utterly pointless through repetition and i wonder if perhaps christmas has taken on the same thing for you perhaps christmas has become pointless what is the point of christmas we do it every year we sing these songs carols they go way too high we can't keep up we eat mince pies which are awful by the way i'm sorry for those of you who love mince pies they are objectively horrendous the proof of which is that we only eat them once a year um relatives that we were hoping we might never have to see again that maybe the 12 months that have passed since last christmas might have finally finished them off turns out we're seeing them again and we might have ultimately lost the point of christmas what is christmas about anyway does my child really have to wear a tea towel on their heads does my christmas jumper really need to be that hideous and oh trust me it is hideous and do i really have to eat granny's christmas pudding once again as me and my father but for some reason my sister and mother never had to do so every single year and it was vile and perhaps more so though why do we ask ourselves the question and why do we every year sorry why do we sing these songs about a baby that was born in a glorified feeding trough 2 000 years ago is christmas pointless why do we do christmas at all well here we have in this one verse and i would encourage you please open up these little booklets and that you had the readings from page 8 page 8 right at the bottom with the little verse 16 that's where we're going to be for the whole of this talk it's a summary um this is john 3 16 for god so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life it's a summary and we love a summary because if you're anything like me which is a slow learner and addicted to netflix which has decimated your attention span um then you absolutely love a summary and i and i know you know what i mean we've never watched a whole youtube video on normal speed it's always on times two so if someone wants to kind of pull out the headphones it would just be you know that kind of intense speeds and i know that you do the same thing i do which is you scroll to the most replayed some of

the people in the room are looking at me like what on earth are you talking about but you scroll to the place in the video that is the most replayed point because we love a summary and here well this is john's summary john's executive summary for the point of christmas this is why jesus came in other words if you get this verse if you understand just this verse and what it means well you've understood christmas it is john's summary and in this summary we're going to see three things three things for us this morning three things how god feels how god has acted and the consequences how god feels how god has acted and the consequences so to begin with how god feels he loves the world have a look down with me again that little 16 page eight keep it open for god so loved the world that's how god feels now that should knock our socks off god loves the world but the world of course it isn't very lovable in fact if 2023 was to have a hashtag caption or whatever i don't know what the young kids call it these days if it was to have a motto 2023 well a very very good contender would be this world is not lovable wars death of innocence men of power lying for their own ends no the world has not been very lovable at all this this year but not just this year we could think back couldn't we even in the last couple of hundred years the holocaust cambodia rwanda no the world is not very lovable at all in fact it's quite easy to see and if we just take a cursory glance over history that the world is not very lovable and it's easy therefore isn't it to look out there and say yeah the world isn't very lovable but of course ladies and gentlemen as soon as we do that as soon as we say the world out there isn't very lovable well then we have to turn the lens on ourselves and we have to ask the question am i very lovable am i lovable um and if uh i'm uh and if i'm honest um in my best moments i would say that yes i am very lovable actually i think if you were to ask my wife um at the end of this service um she would definitely say that i am the wittiest the funniest the kindest the most gentle um the the most easygoing man that she's ever met she would say that 100 of the time all of the time maybe she'd say it 50 of the time and if i'm being honest she would say it none of the time i've done routinely what i shouldn't have done i've routinely lied for the first two years of my marriage um i lied to my wife all the time and because husbands we're supposed to get stuff done and my wife would ask me have you done the dishwasher and i'd say yep knowing full well i've not done it and then i'd rush off to try and do it i would lie constantly for the first two years of my marriage and if the lord was to point the lens at me i would see and he would see that i'm not very lovable either and so ladies and gentlemen what about you if you let everyone into the darkest places your thoughts your minds your motivations at your worst point if we were to put them up on this screen behind us all the things that you've thought in the last year about other people all the things that you thought in the last year about god what would it show no ladies and gentlemen i'm not very lovable you're not very lovable the world is not very lovable and yet this is the staggering fact of our verse verse 16 god so loved the world god so loved the world that is a truth that knocks your socks off the world is not very lovable and yet god so loves the world and notice what the verse does not say the verse does not say god so loves the good people in the world the verse does not say god so loves the people that have been christened in the world do we notice that the verse doesn't even say god so loves the christians in the world do we notice that no no no no god so loves the world

the whole world that is how god feels that is point number one god loves the world point number two have a look down with me again number 16 verse little 16 and that he gave his only son this is point two what what god has done he gave his only son now this is where we really get to the heart of the christmas story this is it ladies and gentlemen this is the summary this is the heart of it because god loved an unlovable world he sent his son into that world this first christmas that's what we've been singing about with all of these songs but here is the greater shock he sent his son into an unlovable world that first christmas to die for it why because this unlovable world needs a savior needs a rescuer now allow me to ask you a question a thought experiment it's not my question but it's a great question all the best questions are and the questions that you steal from somebody else if you were to die today and you met god at the pearly gates and god asked you he looked down at his book and said ah great to see you why should i let you in how would you answer that question how would you answer that question i wanted to get that answer in our mind now you were to die today and you were to meet god and god asked you why should i let you into heaven how would you answer that question would you say is because i'm a good person lord i've lived a good life would you say my christ ... my parents are christian lord i ... you should let me in ... lord someone poured water on my forehead i was christened therefore lord you should let me in because however you answer that question if you were to die tonight and the Lord asks you why should I let you in however you answer that question that is where your confidence is now however you chose to answer if you chose to answer well because I'm a good person or maybe I've got good karma or maybe because I've been christened well let me ask you ladies and gentlemen is that really enough given how unlovable the world is given how unlovable I am given how unlovable you are is that really enough for God to let me in but John says that Jesus came to die for this unlovable world and unlovable people how big is the problem of our unloveliness if Jesus had to die for it very big I would imagine bigger than the fact that we've been christened bigger than the fact that we might think of ourselves as good people very big we need a rescuer this is what the bible in that slightly strange word calls sin our unloveliness towards each other and towards God and God his son his sent his son into the world to do that job of saving us by dying for us now I'm a cringe hater anybody else in the room you're British most of you so I'd imagine that you hate cringe I hate cringe so much that I can't even watch a tv program of other people experiencing cringy situations I have to turn it off can't stand it um can't stand it at all and recently I became a father and she is objective and people always laugh when I say this and I don't know why but she is objectively the cutest baby you will ever see and I genuinely don't mean that as a joke people like Benji can't use sarcasm in the sermon

I'm not being sarcastic she is genuinely the cutest baby you've ever seen because she is and I realized recently that I would climb over broken glass to make that girl giggle and furthermore I would I would act in the cringiest way in public I don't care who's there if it meant that I got one smile from that face because she is the cutest baby in the entire world recently at the Chris Stingle I had to dress as a giant orange in an inflatable suit it was one of the worst moments of my life I hated it but if it meant if I had to dress in an orange every single day to make my little girl smile trust me I would be having a subscription to Amazon to make sure they were coming in my door every single day but ladies and gentlemen I want to make absolutely clear there is no way on this earth I would ever give my little girl for anyone in this room or anyone period for that matter I would never give her for anyone else and yet the shocking truth of what the lord is saying in this verse is that god gave his son do we see that in verse 16 that whoever believes in here that god gave his only son to die for me to die for you god gave what he loved the most for an unlovable world is that not staggering god gave what he loved the most for an unlovable world is that not staggering final point point three the consequences have a look down me again verse 16 that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life you see john makes clear elsewhere that our unlovable world it isn't neutral our sin our unloveliness your sin the world's sin it deserves punishment god is just and he wonderfully and we emphasize that word wonderfully he won't let evil go unpunished did you know that in the year after sarah everard was murdered do we remember sarah everard the horrendous story 15 more women were killed in london that same year despite all the protests despite all the marches and in god's world they don't get away with it the wars and the atrocities that we're seeing in the middle east and in russia in ukraine in god's world they don't get away with it justice is a wonderful thing the only issue is we don't like it when that justice is turned onto our unloveliness we need a rescuer god is just he won't let evil go unpunished and we know don't we we know that the world is not very lovable and if we're honest with ourselves we know that we are not very lovable and if we come back to that question if you were to die tonight and you were to meet god and he was to ask you why should i let you in um we would know wouldn't we if we were honest with ourselves that we have no leg to stand on no leg to stand on whatsoever our good works they are worthless before this god well because god loved this unlovable world he did the unthinkable he sent his son to die in our place in our you see this is as we said this is the summary if you get this you get the lot it is a like for like swap if you put your faith in jesus i get jesus's perfect life i get jesus's eternal life with the father i get god's forgiveness and jesus on the cross he gets all my unloveliness the punishment for all of my sin jesus takes it and so i can walk up to god and say because of jesus you must let me in if we return to that question return to that question lord why um if the god asked me um why ben why should i let you benji into heaven i wouldn't be able to answer that question any differently to anybody else in this room i would have to say god you shouldn't let me in i'm so unlovable but because of what the lord jesus christ has done for me because i put my trust

in him well lord i think you can let me in and the lord would look at me and say son you shall not perish and that is how our verse concludes verse 16 that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life and notice that word whoever isn't that a liberating word it means that whoever singular every single person in this room in other words the offer is being made that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life if you were to die tonight and god were to ask you why should i let you in anyone in this room could say because jesus died for me and god would say welcome home it's a wonderful thing to know that you will never perish it is a wonderful thing to know that you will never perish so as we conclude ladies and gentlemen to return to our question is christmas pointless and many of you might be thinking it is i hope that we see that john wants to persuade you and show you that christmas is not pointless that the great promise has been made that god broke into our world in the person of a baby so that he might die for that world that god gave what he loved most for an unlovable world and so the offer is being extended and i would highly recommend do take away one of these eyewitness accounts do have a read of it the offer is being made to you whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life i hope you have a very wonderful christmas we will also pay impacts the price of the price each time for our sake of sin so um that promise is added conventionally the way to win the popular location moves Big is but he will never bring for that HP and look um how willing to win the reply that can i trust anyone in terms of the pricecher here another page of Baker and see you who never really does that are the graphicsAS but i love em I'm gave you as many prouds of you but i want to be